Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.
Editor: Michael P. Birks, 36 Trevor Road, Flixton, URMSTON, Manchester M41 5QH. England. 0161-747 5924.

Vol.IV, No.68 July 1997

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The **Central American Group** is a part of the **Spanish Main Philatelic Society,** the leading Society in the world for collectors of Latin America. The journal of the SMPS is *The Mainsheet*, published quarterly, and is free with your subscription. The Secretary is Brian Moorhouse, PO Box 105, PETERBOROUGH PE3 8TQ, England. Phone 01733 2687078. The subscription is currently £8 in Europe or $20 elsewhere. Cheques in sterling of US$ should be made payable to "The Spanish Main". A three year subscription of £21/$54 and a five year subscription of £30/$80 are available and payment for these longer subscriptions may be made by Access, Mastercard or Visa. The minimum subscription is one year. If joining during the course of the year the appropriate part subscriptions should be added - Feb-Apr £6/$15; May-Aug £4/$10; Sep-Nov £2/$5 to pay through to the following January when the subscription paid will come into effect.

The **Central American Group** caters for the collectors of Mexico to Panama. Its journal, which you are now reading, is published quarterly, and is available by annual subscription. The subscription is currently £6/$11 resident in the UK or in Europe, or £8/$15 elsewhere. The minimum subscription is one year. If joining after June 1st, add 50% to pay through to the following January when the subscription paid will come into effect. Cheques in sterling payable to "The CA Group" should be sent to the treasurer, David Hankey, 2 Prince's Drive, Marple, STOCKPORT SK6 6NJ, England. Phone 0161-449 0693. We shall be pleased to forward the relevant portions of multi-subscription cheques to the SMPS or the Chile Group.

We regret we cannot accept dollar cheques for subscriptions because each cheque costs £5/$8 to negotiate.

Back issues are available to members at 75p/$1.50 each, although Volumes 1 and 2 can be purchased for £10/$20 each, complete, inclusive of postage. Non-members may request a sample copy for 75p/$1.50 post paid. Requests for back issues should be sent the the Editor, to whom cheques should be made payable. Undated dollar cheques are acceptable for this service.

The group leader is Richard Saundry, Gwrych Cottage, Godstone Road, Bletchingley, REDHILL RH1 4PL, Surrey, England. Phone 01883 742186.

The group does not run a packet. The SMPS Packet Secretary is Brian Sylvester, 3 Russell Court, St Lukes Road, MAIDENHEAD SL6 7AP Berkshire, England. Phone 01628 784555.

Although most packets are of a general nature, there are occasional specialised one country packets. Good and unusual material is always wanted.

Owing to insurance difficulties, the packet is not available to overseas members, although we shall be pleased to accept material for inclusion from them.

The auctioneer of the SMPS is Brian Moorhouse, to whom Auction and Private Treaty lots should be sent. Brian is a dealer, and will include your name on his mailing list if requested to do so.

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Vol.IV, No.68 **July 1997**

EDITORIAL

I hope to meet many of you on Saturday 28 June, which if it has escaped your notice is the date of MIDPEX. Billed as an exhibition and stamp fair, it is the venue for specialist societies to get together and put on displays of a more specialised nature. Knowing of this the dealers tend to cater for the less usual material and I found last time that several dealers I had not come across before had Latin America on offer, simply because they knew we were there.

The location is the Midland Sports Centre for the Disabled, Cromwell Lane, Tile Hill, Coventry, which is adjacent to Tile Hill railway station. 60 specialist societies and over 40 dealers will be there and a good time will be had by all!

If you are thinking of staying overnight on the Friday, you may care to join David Hankey, Hamish Reid, Dick Saundry, John West and myself for the evening. David Hankey will supply all the accommodation details if you ring him on 0161 449 0693.

We would like to extend our congratulations to Mdme Cécile Gruson who was invited to apply for membership of the *Circle d'Etude Philatélique du Léman*, an academic type of society whose members specialise in a particular area. Cécile must deliver a paper at conference in September after which her membership is confirmed. She will be the first woman to be admitted to the society and it will put "CPhH" after her name, being the Swiss equivalent of FRPSL (she says - but anyone can get an FRSPSL!). Well done indeed.

Would you like a copy of Higgins & Gage catalogue for your postal stationery collection? Don't want to buy a whole book with a huge section you do not need? Stephen Holder of Harry Hayes Sales Ltd, The Barn, Heaton Royds, Shay Lane, Bradford BD9 6SH, England, splits the catalogues and sells the pages by individual countries. Nicaragua cost me £2, and I would imagine very few of the Latin American countries sell well. He has several copies of each country and prices relate to the number of pages.

My request for copy was underwhelming, hence the large proportion of Nicaragua again.

mpb

For the diary:- **Saturday 15 November 1997**
Spanish Main auction with Brian Moorhouse commencing
1.00 p.m. prompt, viewing in the morning, finished by 4.30 p.m..
The Station Hotel (next to the railway station), Peterborough

NICARAGUA: POSTAL RATES FROM 1913 - Part 3

by MICHAEL P BIRKS FRPSL

1921 was a watershed in the establishing of the postal rates of Nicaragua with two major influences affecting them. First the adoption of Pan-American rates (at a date yet to be determined) and secondly the fire which destroyed the post office building in Managua. The first resulted in uniform surface rates (but not airmail rates as we shall see later) for the Americas, Spain and the Portugal Phillipies (plus a few offshore islands) and the second a 1c obligatory tax to the same destinations.

The Pan-American rate of 2c for a single letter, plus 1c obligatory tax, remained the same until 193~~7~~8. Examples below are an inland cover (figure 12) and a cover to Buenos Aires (Figure 13).

586 RA39

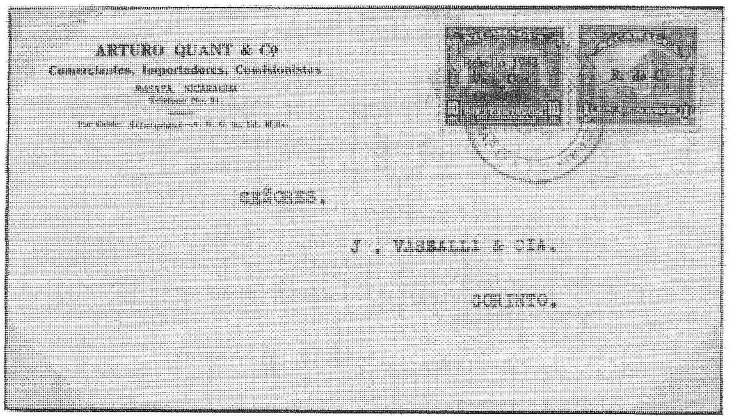

ARTURO QUANT & Co
Comerciantes, Importadores, Comisionistas
RAMA, NICARAGUA
SEÑORES.
J . VASSALLI & CIA.
CORINTO.

Figure 11. 4 May 1933, to Corinto 2c postage + 1c tax.

627

RA51?

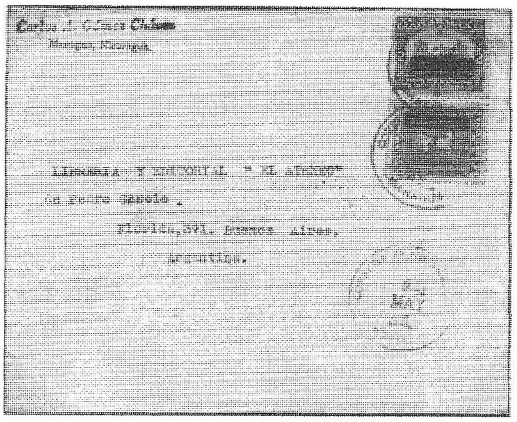

Managua, Nicaragua.
LIBRERIA Y EDITORIAL "EL ATENEO"
de Pedro García
Florida, 371. Buenos Aires.
Argentina.
MAY

Figure 12. 5 May 1936, to Argentina.
2c postage + 1c tax

350? 354

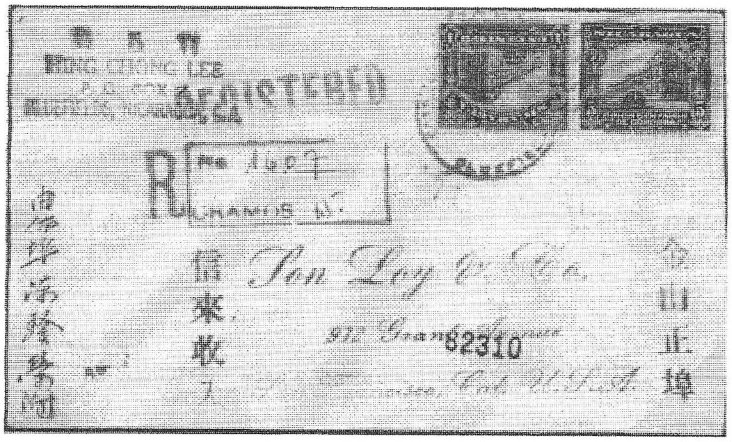

REGISTERED
R
No 1607
Son Loy & Co.
82310

Figure 13. 12 June 1926, to USA. 2c postage + 1c tax + 3c reg.

The registration rate was 5c in 1921 but reduced to 3c some time in 1925. The cover, figure 13, is a single rate registered cover to the USA. Marked 15g, and franked 1c plus 5c, the rate is made up of 2c postage, 1c obligatory tax and 3c registration.

Unfortunately I have no examples of AR Pan-American mail for this period, where stamps for the fee have been affixed, and so cannot suggest a rate for this service as yet. Details of overseas rates supplied to the UPU show an AR rate of half the registration rate. This would suggest that the AR rate for Pan-American mail could be in the order of 3c, possibly reducing to 2c.

15 Sept 1930

The overseas rate was 10c for the first 20g plus 6c for each subsequent 20g or part and remained in force until early ~~1931~~. The obligatory tax did not apply to overseas destinations. The registration fee was 10c and, according to the UPU, the AR rate was 5c. However Richard Saundry's observations about AR fees in our last few issues prove to be infuriatingly correct. Figure 16 appears to be an AR cover, bearing an additional 5c postage but is not marked as such.

481

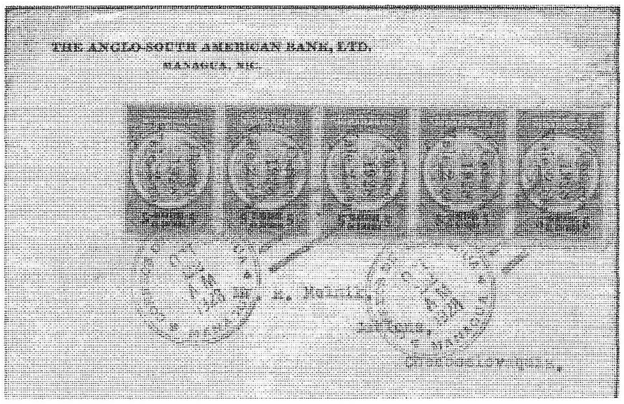

THE ANGLO-SOUTH AMERICAN BANK, LTD.
MANAGUA, NIC.

Figure 14. 22 October 1928 to Czechoslovakia.
10c rate.

410?

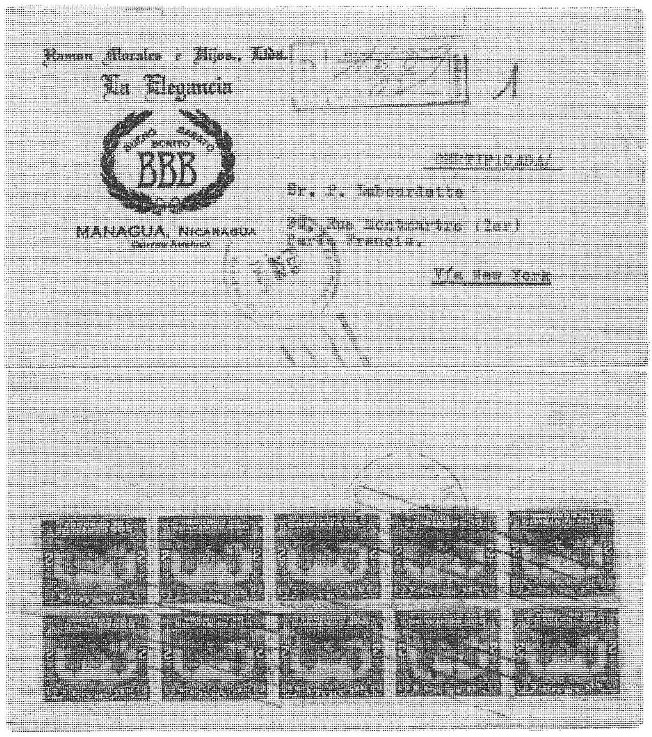

Ramon Morales e Hijos, Ltda.
La Elegancia
BBB
MANAGUA, NICARAGUA
CERTIFICADA
Sr. P. Labourdette
Paris Francia.
Via New York

Figure 15. 22 February 1924 to France. 10c+10c registration (front and back of the cover showing the weight as 12g)

354 x 3 356? 10c?

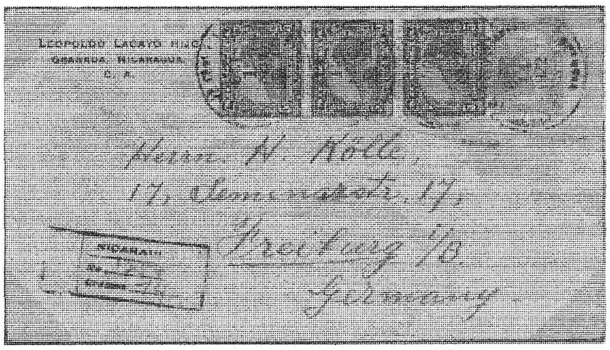

LEOPOLDO LACAYO
GRANADA, NICARAGUA
C. A.
Herrn H. Kölle,
17, Seminarstr. 17,
Freiburg i/B
Germany

Figure 16 (right). 14 October 1922 to Germany.
10c + 10c reg + 5c AR

The postcard rate to Pan-American destinations was 1c with an added 1c for obligatory tax, and remained unchanged until ~~1937~~ 15 Sept 1930, like the letter rate (figure 17). There was a ½c postcard rate which appears to have applied to local postcards. Overseas the rate was 6c with no obligatory tax and, like the letter rate, remained unchanged until early ~~1931~~ (figure 18).

↑

card 83

RA 2

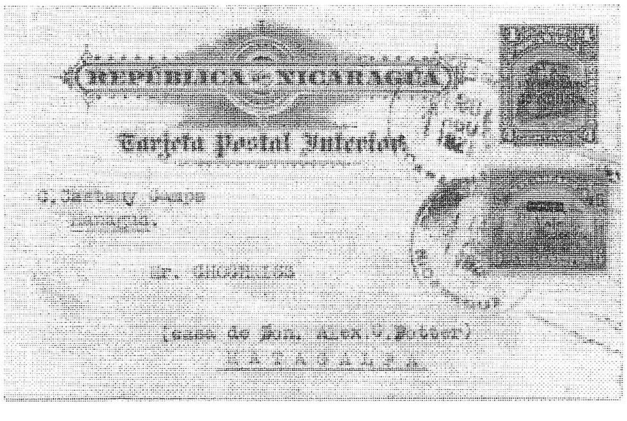

REPUBLICA DE NICARAGUA
Tarjeta Postal Interior
Managua.
MATAGALPA

Figure 17. 26 August 1921, to Matagalpa. 1c + 1c tax.

card 87

354

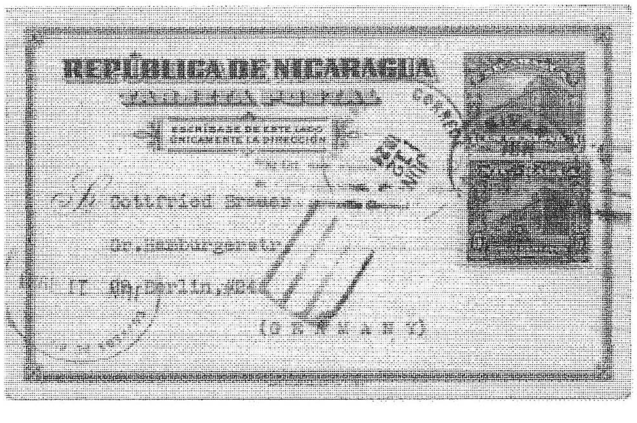
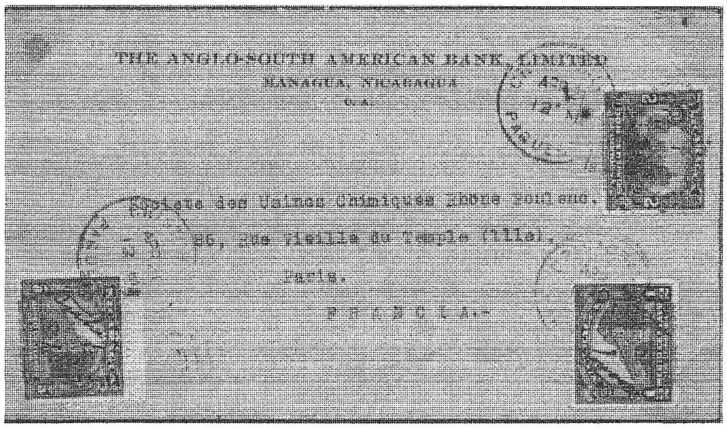

REPUBLICA DE NICARAGUA
Sr. Gottfried Brenner
Berlin
(GERMANY)

Figure 18. 12 June 1924, to Germany. 6c rate.

On 15 Sept 1930

~~By 28 April 1931~~ (therefore probably earlier) the overseas rates had been reduced. The first weight step of 20g had been reduced to 7½c (figure 19) with each subsequent step being 4½c (figure 20). Registration remained 10c (figure 21), but according to information supplied to the UPU, the AR rate was increased to 8c, but I have no evidence of this.


THE ANGLO-SOUTH AMERICAN BANK, LIMITED
MANAGUA, NICARAGUA
C.A.
86, rue Vieille du Temple (111e),
Paris.
FRANCIA.-

485? 2

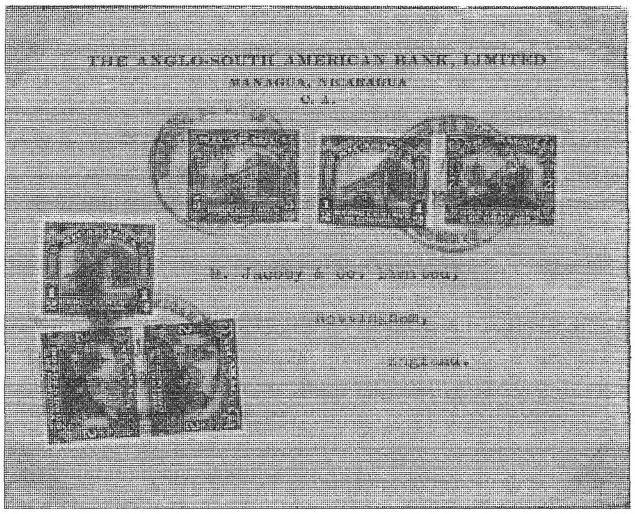
516? 5

483? ½

Figure 19 (left). 21 April 1934 to France. 7½c postage, cancelled by the Cristobal Paquebot showing that European mails were dispatched from the capital via Corinto and the Panama canal.

Figure 20 (lower left).
5 June 1932 to England.
Double rate 7½c + 4½c = 12c.

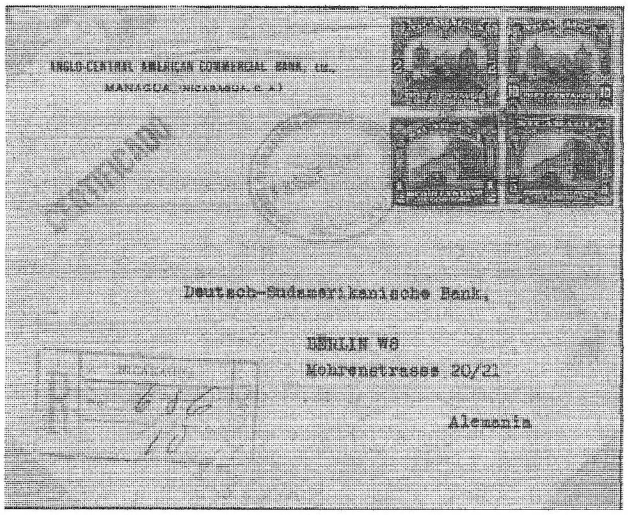
Figure 21 (below).
30 September 1930 to Germany.
7½c postage + 10c registration.


THE ANGLO-SOUTH AMERICAN BANK, LIMITED
MANAGUA, NICARAGUA
C. A.
England.

516? 5
483? ½
485? 2

483? ½

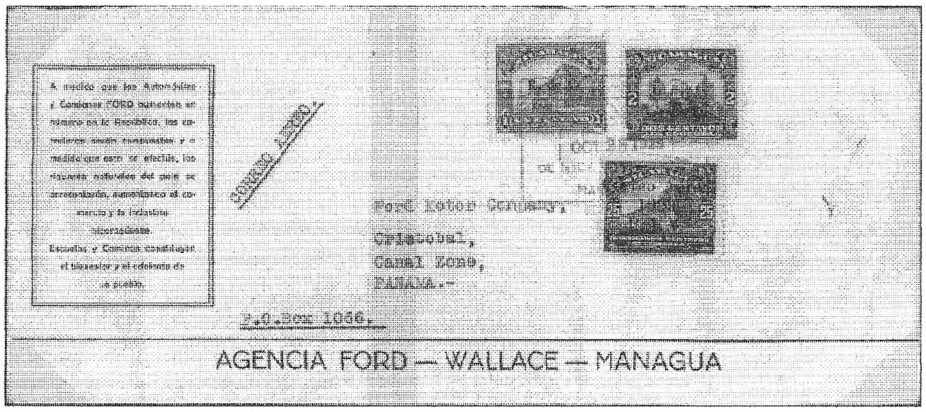
485? 2


ANGLO-CENTRAL AMERICAN COMMERCIAL BANK, Ltd.
MANAGUA (NICARAGUA, C.A.)
Deutsch-Sudamerikanische Bank,
BERLIN W8
Mohrenstrasse 20/21
Alemania
R
616
10

485? 2
490? 10

483? ½
516? 5

Air Mail Rates provided the biggest challenge since it would appear than no-one has done any work on them at all. The introduction of FAM-5 on 4-10 February 1929 saw the introduction of an airmail service, at least as far as New York. The difficulty was in establishing the weight step for airmail - until I realised from the study of covers that it was a 14g step! Pan-American airways, being a US company, charged by the ounce and so the nearest metric equivalent is 28g or 14g per ½ ounce. So the rate was 25c per 14g (figure 22).


CORREO AEREO
Ford Motor Company,
Cristobal,
Canal Zone,
PANAMA.-
P.O. Box 1056.
AGENCIA FORD — WALLACE — MANAGUA

409? 1
485? 2
C2?

Figure 22 (left). 25 October 1929 to Canal Zone, Panama. This cover is correctly franked 2c for postage, 1c for obligatory tax and 25c for airmail.

15 May

At a date in 1930, yet to be determined, airmail rates were reduced. Whilst routes north were now charged at 15c per 14g (figure 23), the rate south to Costa Rica was 20c per 14g (figure 24).

514? 3
C18

513? 1 C12?

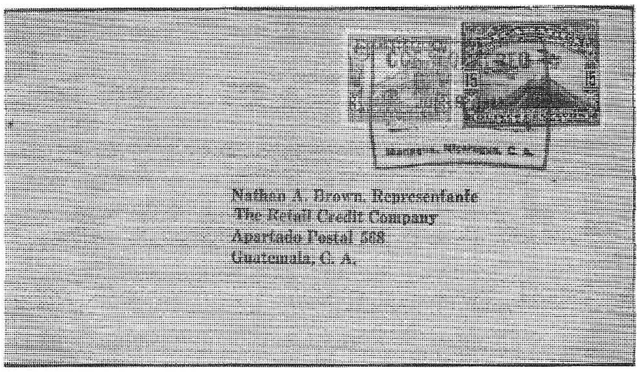

Nathan A. Brown, Representante
The Retail Credit Company
Apartado Postal 568
Guatemala, C. A.

Figure 23. 9 July 1932, to Guatemala.
2c postage + 1c tax + 15c airmail.

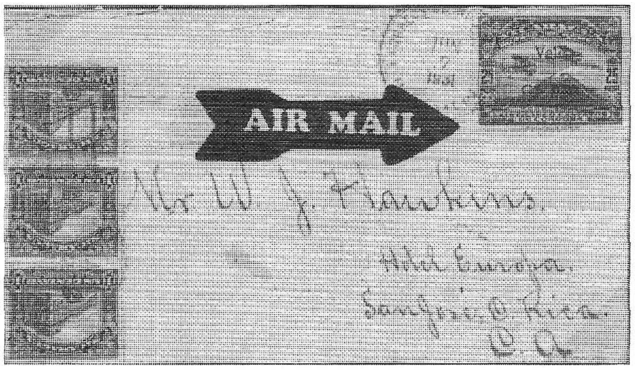

AIR MAIL
Mr W. J. Hawkins,
Hotel Europa,
San José, C. Rica,
C.A.

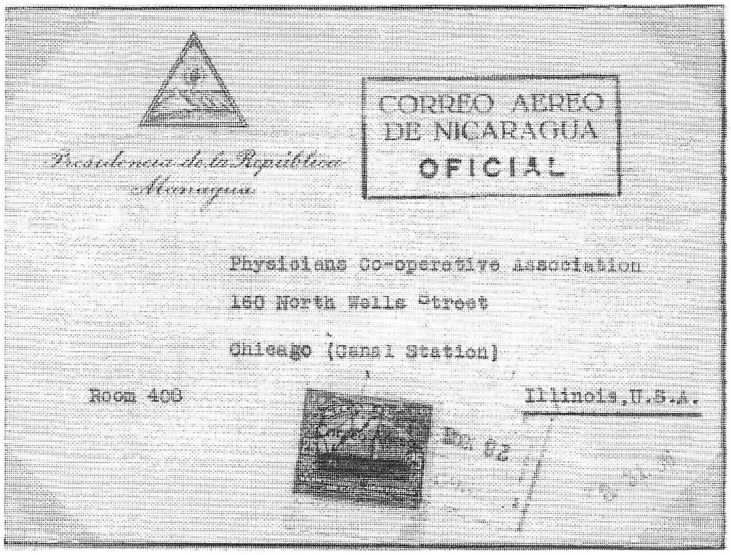
Fig 24. 7 June 1931, to Costa Rica.
2c postage + 1c tax + 20c (on 25c) airmail.

It is interesting to note that already there is an apparent shortage in obligatory tax stamps and that the tax is being incorporated in the postage stamp. However air mail stamps have to be used since this portion of the rate is handed over to Pan-Am and appears to be accounted separately.

An earlier warning about rates on official covers applies here also. This cover (Figure 25), dated 1936, is franked with an obsolete 25c airmail stamp. Some early official covers do bear the correct airmail stamp (but no postage or tax stamps) but this practice clearly ended with the change in rates and the apparent expectation of official departments to use up old stamps!

official

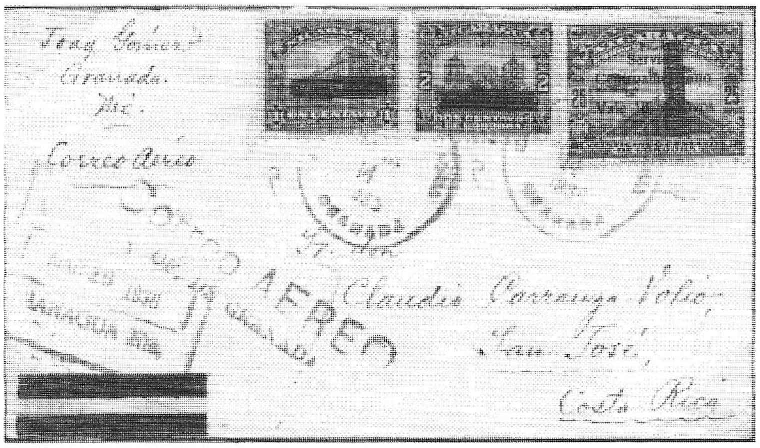
1936


Presidencia de la República
Managua
CORREO AEREO
DE NICARAGUA
OFICIAL
Physicians Co-operative Association
160 North Wells Street
Chicago (Canal Station)
Room 408
Illinois, U.S.A.

CO17?

On 13 March 1934 the first 10c airmail surcharge stamp appeared. It may well be that the cut in airmail rates dates from this time but I am unable to pinpoint the exact date.

1936?
604?
605?
C145?

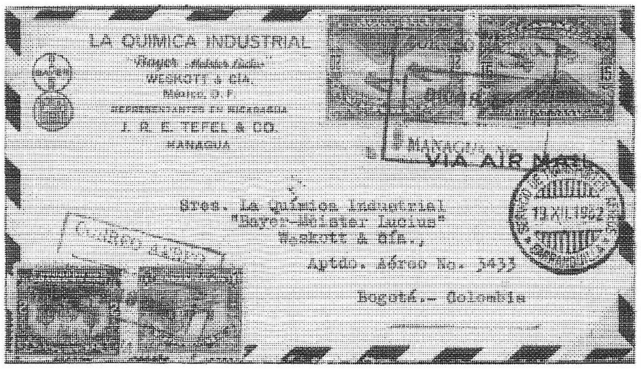

José Gómez
Granada,
Nic.
Correo Aereo
CORREO AEREO
Claudio Carranza Volio,
San José,
Costa Rica

[redacted]

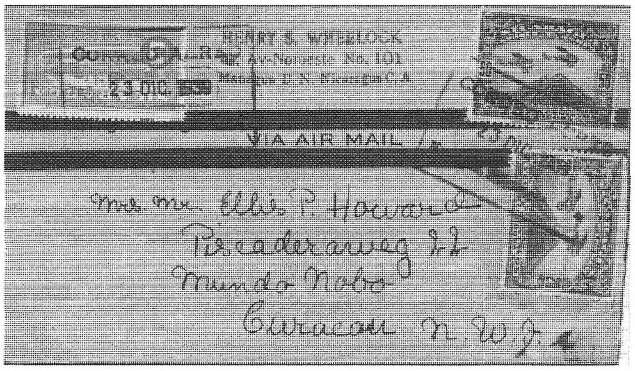
The cover, figure 26 (left) is an example of the 10c airmail rate to Costa Rica. Amazingly I have not been able to find other 10c covers to other destinations and so cannot say how externsive this rate was. Certainly it did not apply to South America as we shall see.

The rate to "northern" South America was 35c per 14g whilst that to "southern" South America was 55c per 14g. I am unable to define the line between "northern" and "southern" at this time.

C19
C18
513? 1
410? 2


LA QUIMICA INDUSTRIAL
Bayer Meister Lucius
WESKOTT & CIA.
México, D. F.
REPRESENTANTES EN NICARAGUA
J. R. E. TEFEL & CO.
MANAGUA
VIA AIR MAIL
CORREO AEREO
Sres. La Quimica Industrial
"Bayer-Meister Lucius"
Weskott & Cía.,
Aptdo. Aéreo No. 3433
Bogotá.- Colombia
19 XII 1932

676 3c
C167?
C165?


HENRY S. WHEELOCK
23 DIC 1939
VIA AIR MAIL
Mrs. Mr. Ellis P. Howard
Piscaderaweg 22
Mundo Nobo
Curacau N. W. I.

C29?
655? 3

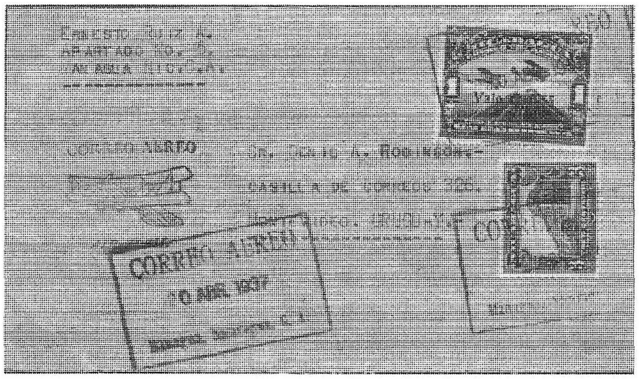
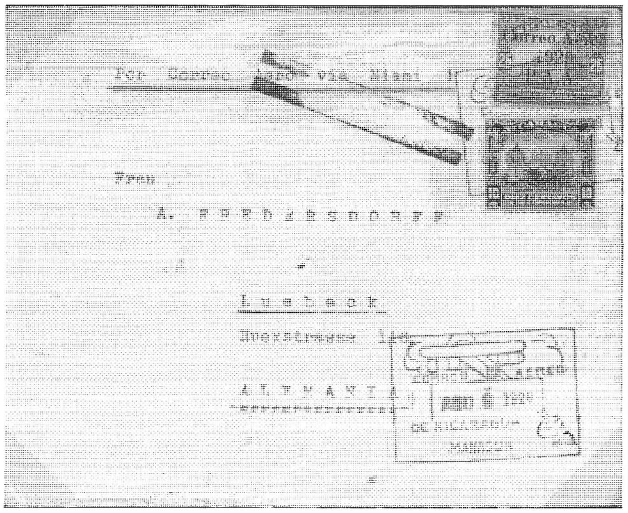

CORREO AEREO
CORREO AEREO
20 ABR 1937
CASILLA DE CORREOS 326
MONTEVIDEO. URUGUAY

Figure 27 (top left). 18 December 1932, to Colombia. 2c postage + 1c tax + 35c airmail (under 14g).

Figure 28 (top right). 23 December 1939, to Curacao. 3c postage and tax + 70c double airmail for a letter between 15g and 20g.

Figure 29 (left). 20 April 1937, to Uruguay. 3c postage and tax + 55c (on C1) airmail for a letter under 14g.

C2
356 10


Por Correo Aéreo via Miami
Fren
A. FERDERSDORFF
Luebeck
Huexstrasse 114
ALEMANIA
MANAGUA

Mail for **overseas destinations**, such as Europe, was carried by air to New York, for the 25c fee. There the "air mail" endorsement was struck out by purple parallel bars and the journey continued by sea.

Figure 23 (left). 9 August 1929 to Germany. A cover carried by air to New York and then sent onward to Europe by sea. 10c overseas postage plus 25c airmail fee.

I believe the first flight north was on 15 May 1929, according to a cover I have, sent to France.

It may well be that when the 10c overseas rate was reduced to 7½c (&4½c), the airmail rate was reduced to 15c at the same time. However the combination of 20g postage steps combined with 14g airmail steps leads to some interesting rates, and rate steps, at this time;

Weight	0-14g	15-20g	21-28g	29-40g	41-42g	43-56g	57-60g
Postage	7½	7½	7½+4½=12	7½+4½=12	7½+4½+4½=16½	7½+4½+4½=16½	7½+4½+4½=16½
Air	15	2x15=30	2x15=30	3x15=45	3x15=45	4x15=60	5x15=75
Rate	22½c	37½c	42c	57c	61½c	76½c	91½c

C 18
410? 2
483? ½
516? 5

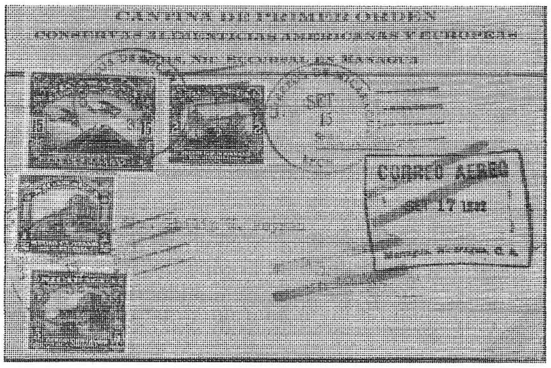


Figure 24. 15 September 1932, to Denmark
7½c postage + 15c airmail

C 27? 35

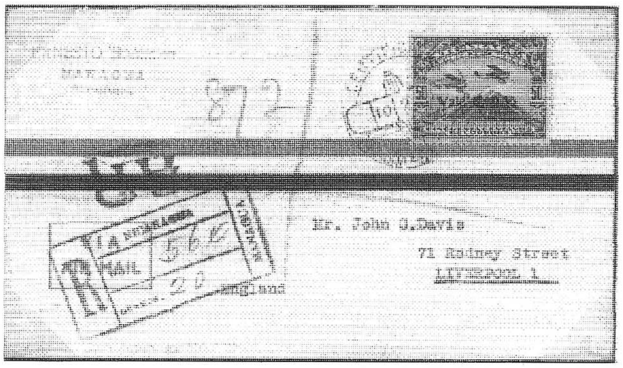


Figure 25. 12 February 1934, to England
20g: 7½c postage + 2x15c air + 10c reg + 8c AR = 55½c
35c (on 50c) on front + 20c on back = 55c

609? ½ 615? 3 616? 4 618? 6 621? 20

C115? 50
C141? 30
C114? 25
630 2
C112? 15
629 1

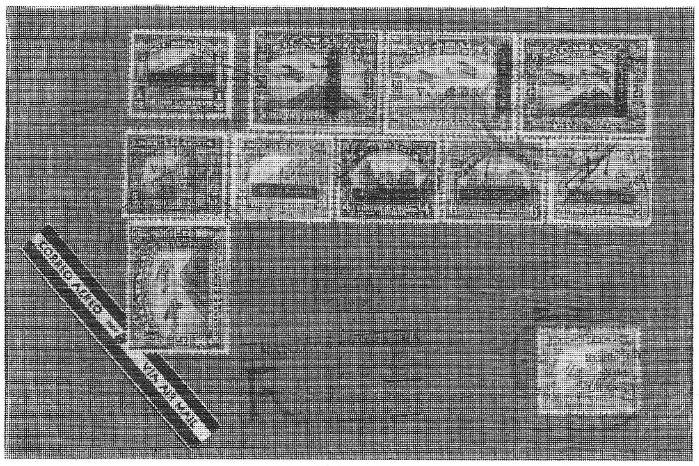


Figure 26. This 100g registered cover is franked 1Cor 55½c made up of five postage steps plus eight 14g airmail steps. If the airmail step was 15g, *seven 15g steps* would not fit the rate. I now have others to confirm this, but at the time it was a real puzzler. Isn't it amazing how obvious some things are in retrospect?

It was this cover which sparked off my interest in postage rates and eventually led to this series of articles. 15×8 = 120 7½ + (4½×4) = 25½

In the next part we will look at internal airmail and continue through the war years. regis = 10

The table below summarises the rates outlined in this part.

	Destinations	Pan-American, including Spain and the Phillipines				Overseas			
		Postcard	Letter	Reg. Fee	A.R. Fee	Postcard	Letter	Reg. Fee	A.R. Fee
7a	1921 - 1925 Nov 1924	1c +1c tax	2c/20g +1c tax	3 ~~5~~c	▨	6c	10c/20g; 6c/20g	10c	5c
7b	Dec 1924 1925 - 1931	1c +1c tax	2c/20g +1c tax	3c	▨	6c	10c/20g; 6c/20g	10c	5c
	airmail (from 1929) per 14g (½ oz)	1929 25c/14g 1930 15c/14g; Costa Rica 20c/14g				1929 25c/14g 1930 15c/14g as far as ~~NY~~ Miami			
8	28 April 1931-1937	▨	2c/20g +1c tax	3c	▨	4½c	7½c/20g; 4½c/20g	10c	8c
	airmail per 14g	15c; reduced 1934 or 35 to 10c; N Sth Am 35c; S Sth America 55c				15c as far as NY			

Following the publication of Part 2 of this rate study, I had a most helpful letter from **Kay Rasmussen** of Denmark. He informs me that the 35c foreign rate was still in force on 14 December 1911 but had increased to 50c by 27 December, and that that rate lasted until at least 18 May 1913, which closes the gaps a bit further.

He also shows a local cover dated 29 May 1913 rated 30c. This suggests an internal rate of 15c/15g for a single letter (I doubt rates would triple for local mail whilst increasing by 50% for overseas mail). This further suggests the introduction of the Gold Cordoba could have been 1 June 1913. I can add to this a 30c local rate for 26 December 1911, which again I believe to be a double rate.

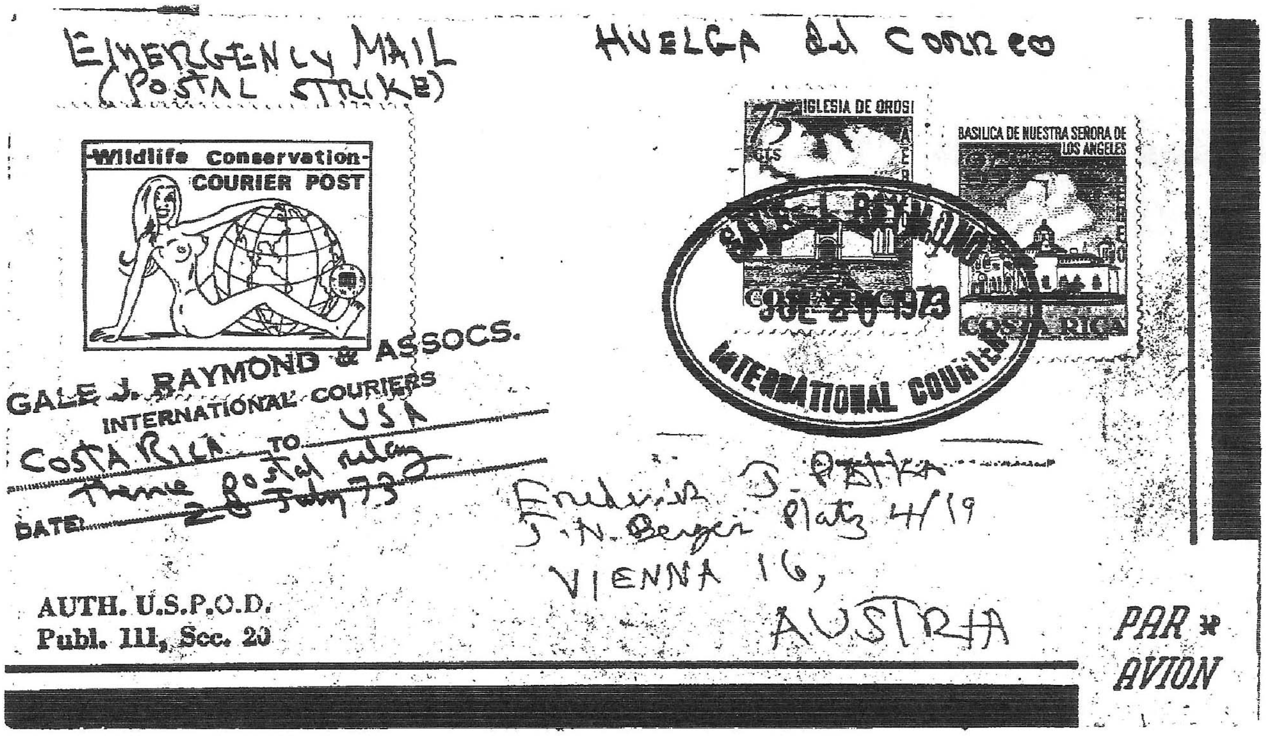
He suggests that the 4c rate I mentioned could be a double printed papers rate - quite possible.

Unbeknown to me the photocopy I used for Figure 8, which should have been captioned "1915", belongs to him.

INTERNATIONAL COURIER MAIL DURING THE 1973 COSTA RICAN POSTAL STRIKE

by RICHARD H SAUNDRY

Most collectors who specialise in one or just a few countries sometimes acquire the most bizarre items that more often than not add an extra dimension to their collections. One of the more unusual items that I acquired several years ago from a local stamp fair is a courier cover sent from San Jose to Vienna, Austria, in July 1973 during a strike by Costa Rican postal workers. Although this item is most definitely just philatelic confection and falls into the class of pure trivia and would never have a place in any serious collectors' exhibits, I usually find that this type of cover adds a little interest to my otherwise dull display of Costa Rica to local Philatelic societies.


EMERGENCY MAIL
(POSTAL STRIKE)
HUELGA del CORREO
Wildlife Conservation
COURIER POST
IGLESIA DE OROSI
BASILICA DE NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LOS ANGELES
GALE J. RAYMOND
JUL 20 1973
INTERNATIONAL COURIER
COSTA RICA
GALE J. RAYMOND & ASSOCS.
INTERNATIONAL COURIERS
COSTA RICA TO USA
thence postal relay
DATE: 20 July 73
Frederik J. Patka
F.N. Berger Platz 4/19
VIENNA 16,
AUSTRIA
AUTH. U.S.P.O.D.
Publ. 111, Sec. 20
PAR AVION

The cover shown above was sent airmail by Gale J. Raymond on 20 July 1973 to Frederik J. Patka in Vienna and was correctly franked 110 ctmos in Costa Rican postage stamps. The stamps were cancelled with a purple oval dated cachet "GALE J. RAYMOND / date / INTERNATIONAL COURIER" and to the left hand side of the envelope we see in the same purple ink "GALE J. RAYMOND & ASSOCS. / INTERNATIONAL COURIERS / (Costa Rica) TO (USA) / DATE: (thence postal relay 20 July 1973)" and a second cachet: "AUTH. U.S.P.O.D. / Publ. 111, Sec.20".

An enclosure on a scrap of Hotel Anstel writing paper said:

> "20 July 73 - Fred, I am sorry to be such a poor correspondent, but I am travelling much. I came here as 'mercenary' (at $3000 USA per m month) but is bad situation. Returning to USA, I am also carrying a huge mail, being the only courier here at this emergency! The label is my private joke! Regards, Gale."

Clearly Mr Gale's private joke was the "Wildlife Conservation - Courier Post" private label showing the globe of the world and an example of a hopefully not too endangered species. I know absolutely nothing about the regulations under which international couriers operate but I guess that Mr Gale was licensed only by the US Post Office to bring mails only to the USA, where all such mails would then be forwarded elsewhere via the usual channels. I have another cover, also carried by Mr Gale, this time sent from Vientiane, Laos, 1 February 1972 to Vienna via Los Angeles, with similar cachets, franked with Laotian stamps but not unfortunately with his "private joke". Just as a matter of passing interest are there any of our readers who know how these private mail couriers operated (were there others?) and is mail sometimes carried between other countries, in which case there should be some kind of regulations for their governance under the provisions of the UPU?

As for the emergency in 1973 we read in the Thursday 19 July issue of "The News", an English speaking newspaper distributed free in San Jose, that postal workers in the capital had gone on strike as from Monday, demanding that two top officials of the Postal Service (postal Administrator Calixto Guadumuz and San Jose director Gilbert Pena) be fired. Juana Rosa Venegas, President of the union of Postal Workers and Telegraph Operators, had accused the two officials of "incompetence, and poor personnel relations". By 19 July the bank tellers had returned to the bargaining table (asking for a five day week) and Carlos Manuel Vicente, Minister of Government, was threatening that if the impending session of the Labour Court should rule the strike illegal he would be prepared to take the necessary action, but what action he could take was not clear.

So far this is all I can tell you about the 1973 strike in Costa Rica. No doubt there will be some reader who can tell us the outcome of the strike. As a British writer the apparent scenario in Costa Rica in 1973 sounds all too depressingly familiar since we were plagued with all kinds of industrial action around this time, but if I interpret correctly what I have so far read this strike by postal workers seemed not to be confined solely to grievances against low pay and long hours.

On Tuesday 1 April three members of the Central American Group, under the guise of the Spanish Main P.S. entertained Walton & Weybridge PS to an evening's display. **Tom Butlin** showed 64 pages of Honduras including early Seebeck material and much early postal stationery, with the first half of the evening's entertainment being brought to a successful conclusion by **Dennis Lavery** who showed extracts from his Cuba collection, regaling the audience with his account of the sinking of the Maine. The second half was devoted to Costa Rica when **Richard Saundry** showed 112 pages of registered letters affording the opportunity of explaining several different aspects of Costa Rican postal stationery.

POSTCARDS AND STAMPS FROM THE SANDINISTA REVOLUTION

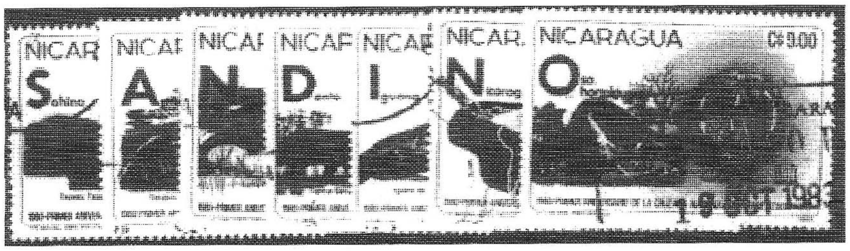
by TONY JAMES

The Nicaraguan Literacy Crusade of 1980 was an integral part of the Sandinista Revolution aimed at the improvement of the living standards of the population. After almost 50 years of dominance by the Somoza family either directly or through figurehead Presidents, the government that came to power after the revolution inherited a crippled economy and a largely illiterate population.

Anastasio Somoza D.

At the time of the revolution a census showed that 50% of the adult population over the age of 10 years was unable to read or write and in some areas of the Atlantic Coast the illiteracy rate was as high as 78%. The literacy crusade was therefore essential if the revitalisation of the economy and the land reform programmes aimed at subsistence farmers and landless peasants were to be successful.

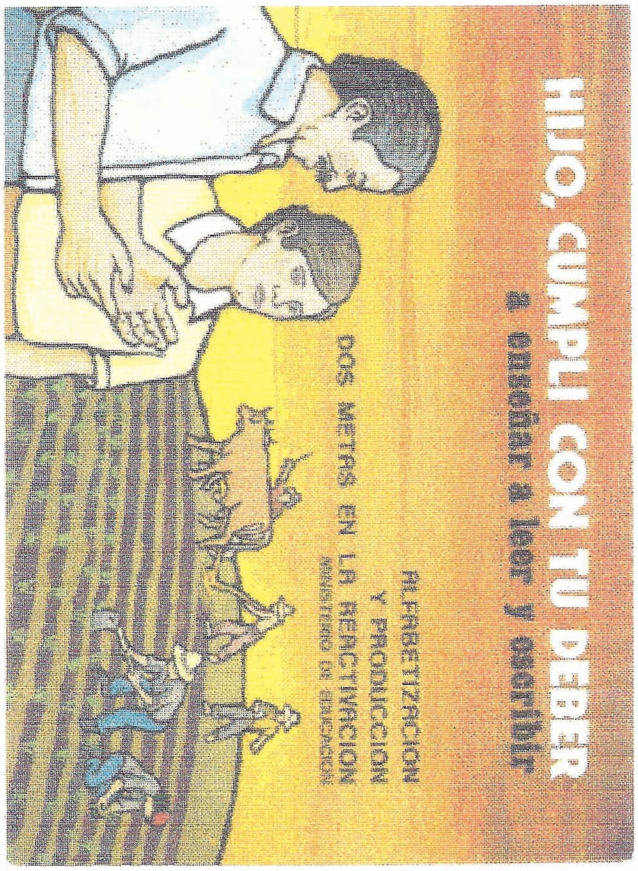
The revolution was a war which affected the whole population, from which ever side it was viewed. The Nicaraguan people are to some extent accustomed to military and natural disasters exacerbating a normally difficult existence, but the overthrow of the Somoza government by the Sandinistas was for most people a time that augured a better future. For the younger generation in particular, it was a time of great excitement and a heady euphoria gripped the country. A true manifestation of this feeling was the eagerness with which the educated young and not so young enthusiastically embraced the Literacy Crusade.



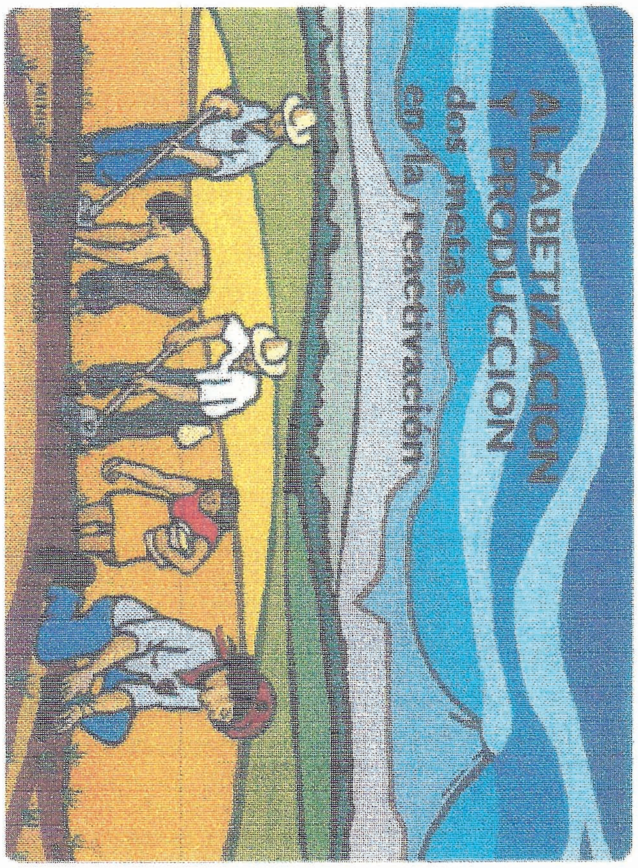
Stamps advertising the literacy campaign, and Sandino, the revolutionary leader.

The Crusade was run by the National Literacy Commission and was presided over by Minister of Education Dr. Carlos Tünnermann. First the literacy crusade teachers themselves needed to be trained and the first 80 people were selected. This core of teachers then taught a further 560, who taught 10,000 more, who in turn taught the 200,000 who would carry out the main task.

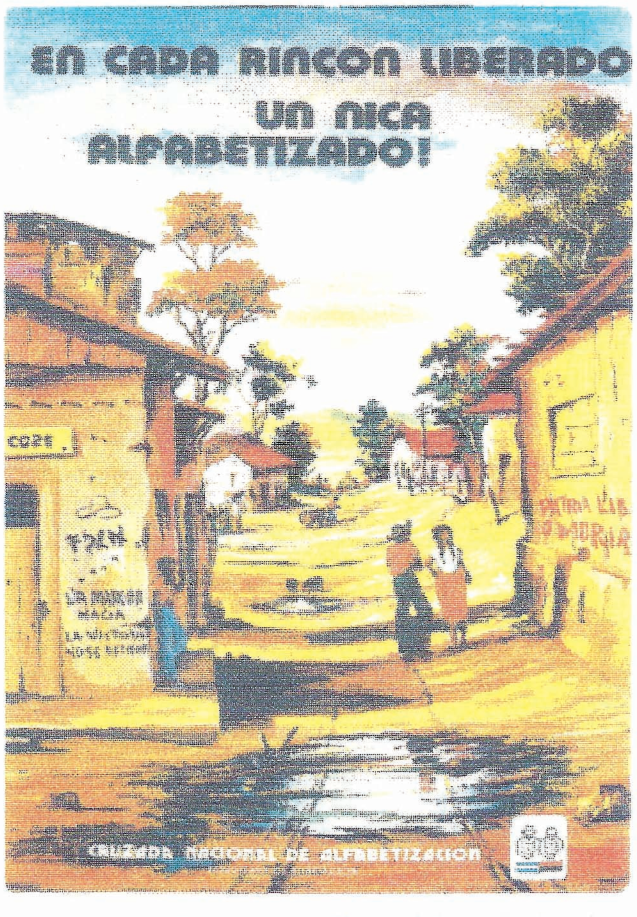
The writer has spent considerable time in Nicaragua and was living there before, during and after the revolution. At that time I was given a set of 14 postcards depicting various aspects of the Literacy Crusade; there may have been others but I did not see them. The cards need to be seen in colour to really appreciate their vibrant simplicity and are reproduced opposite.


HIJO, CUMPLI CON TU DEBER
a enseñar a leer y escribir
DOS METAS EN LA REACTIVACION
ALFABETIZACION
Y PRODUCCION
MINISTERIO DE EDUCACION

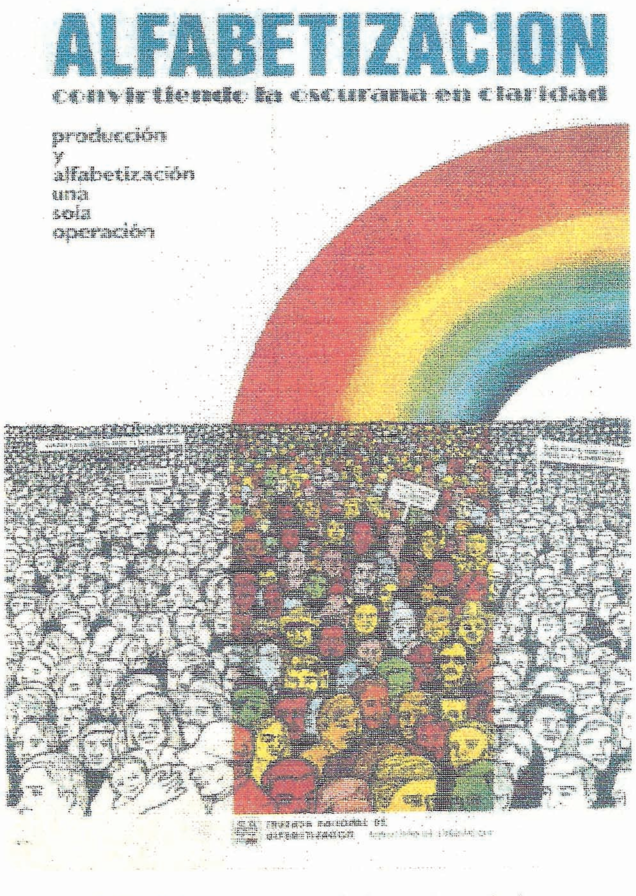
SON, DO WHAT IS EXPECTED OF YOU
learn to read and write


ALFABETIZACION
Y PRODUCCION
dos metas
en la reactivación

LITERACY AND PRODUCTION
two methods of reconstruction


EN CADA RINCON LIBERADO
UN NICA
ALFABETIZADO!
FSLN
PATRIA LIBRE O MORIR
CRUZADA NACIONAL DE ALFABETIZACION

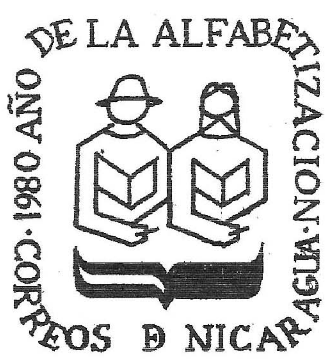
Every corner of Nicaragua is liberated through education


ALFABETIZACION
convirtiendo la oscurana en claridad
producción
y
alfabetización
una
sola
operación
CRUZADA NACIONAL DE ALFABETIZACION

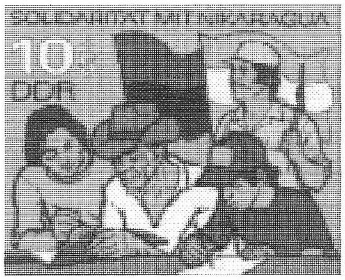
LITERACY converts darkness into clarity

The young people of Nicaragua had been formed into what was called *The Popular Literacy Army* to fight the war aginst ignorance. They were divided into various groups, selected on their ability to cope with specific areas and conditions. On 23 March 1980 there was a departure ceremony for this army in the Plaza of the Revolution in Managua. This was one army that was welcomed in every corner of the country[1] and where the vast majority of the recruits carried out their allotted tasks with a dedication with which the country may be proud.

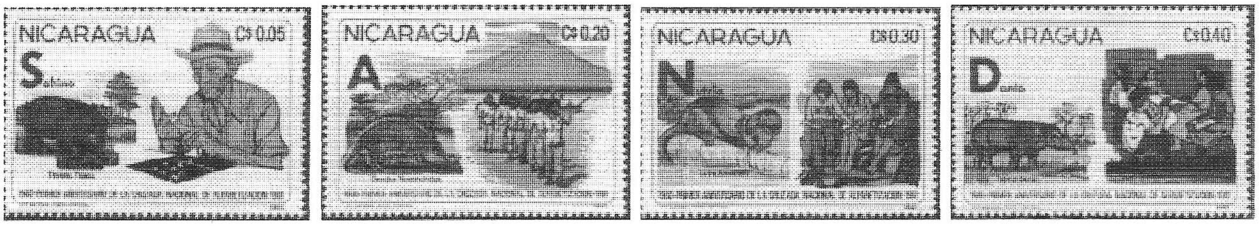
It has been estimated that nearly 500,000 Nicaraguans benefited from this programme and according to the 1981 SANDINO stamp series[2] the literacy rate improved from 50% in 1979 to 88% by the end of 1980 (see second "N" stamp, on bottom row).


1980 AÑO DE LA ALFABETIZACION · NICARAGUA
CORREOS D NICARAGUA

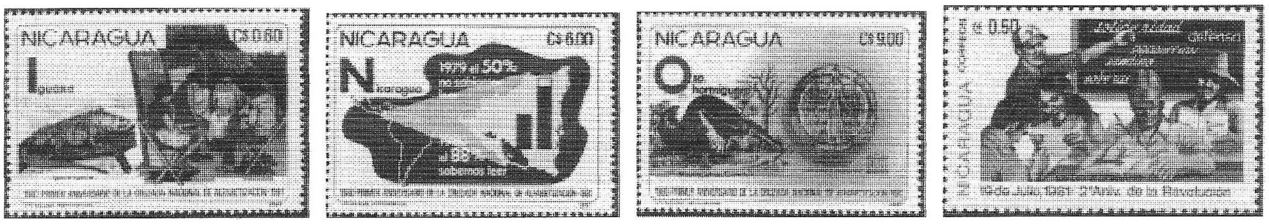
Publicity for the Literacy campaign included a cachet (left) which was applied to the back of mail. The DDR declared solidarity with Nicaragua and depicted peasants learning to read and write, watched over by an armed soldier.


SOLIDARITÄT MIT NICARAGUA
10
DDR

Why the soldier?


NICARAGUA C$0.05
S
NICARAGUA C$0.20
A
NICARAGUA C$0.30
N
NICARAGUA C$0.40
D

The stamps depict various scenes around the countryside, showing the education of the population in progress.


NICARAGUA C$0.60
L
NICARAGUA C$6.00
N
1979 el 50%
88% sabemos leer
NICARAGUA C$9.00
O
NICARAGUA C$0.50
19 de Julio 1981 2° Aniv. de la Revolución

The final stamp is from the set commemmorating the second anniversary of the revolution, and shows the Literacy Crusade continuing today in the form of the Adult Education Programme.

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[1] Manchester is or was twinned with Puerto Cabezas on the Mosquito Shore. At a seminar held in the city some years ago I was told that the Literacy Army was sent packing from that part of Nicaragua because they were trained to educate the population in Spanish and yet much of the coast speaks English of sorts. - Ed

[2] Having shown these stamps to Gibbons shortly after the latest(!) Part 15 appeared, I was informed by them that the stamps are to be listed. However I was unable to find them in the 1993 Stamps of the World. - Ed

The photograph of Somoza, the DDR stamp and the Literacy Cachet are from the Editor's collection.